

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 0625

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SEDU, ID

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF INDONESIAN EDUCATION MINISTER

1. DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON JANUARY 12, MINISTER OF EDUCATION SYARIF THAJEB SAID HE THOUGHT THE RECENT INCREASE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY STUDENTS WAS A HEALTHY SIGN. SUCH ACTIVITY SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED BUT IN ORDER TO AVOID CLASHES WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY, STUDENTS SHOULD CONFINE THEIR SPEECH MAKING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES TO THE VARIOUS CAMPUSES. THERE IS NO OBJECTION TO THEIR CRITICIZING GOVERNMENT POLICIES BUT THEY SHOULD NOT "ATTACK PERSONALITIES". SYARIF SAID STUDENTS FROM CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN SPEARHEADING THE RECENT PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS, POSSIBLY AS A REFLECTION OF THE FACT THAT THE CATHOLIC POLITICAL PARTY HAS LOST STRENGTH UNDER THE CURRENT POLITICAL PARTY CONSOLIDATION. SYARIF SAID HE WAS TOLD THAT STUDENTS IN SURABAYA HAD RUPIAHS 25 MILLION (\$60,000) TO SUPPORT DEMONSTRATIONS. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THIS COULD BE RAISES LOCALLY AND BELIEVED THERE WERE OUTSIDE SOURCES OF FINANCING. HE MENTIONED LIBYA (THROUGH INDONESIAN INTERMEDIARIES) AND THE SOVIET UNION AS POSSIBILITIES.

2. REGARDING THE GOVERNMENT'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SYARIF SAID HE WAS CONCENTRATING ON THREE AREAS:

(Q) CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE SCHOOLS. HE NOTED THAT
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50,000 HAVE BEEN BUILT IN INDONESIA SINCE 1973 -- A RECORD WHICH HE DOES NOT BELIEVE IS EQUALED IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY. MORE WILL CONTINUE UNDER THE THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN.

(B) TECHNICAL EDUCATION. MOST INDONESIAN STUDENTS LEAVE SCHOOL AFTER THE THIRD OR FOURTH YEAR TO WORK IN THE RICE FIELDS. OLDER PERSONS ALSO LACK ADEQUATE TECHNICAL TRAINING TO FIND GOOD JOBS. HE HOPES TO EXPAND EXISTING TECHNICAL

TRAINING SCHOOLS AND ALSO TO SUPPLEMENT THEM BY INTRODUCING A DAILY ONE HOUR BROADCAST TO TRAIN PEOPLE IN FIELDS SUCH AS RADION, TV AND AUTOMOBILE REPAIR.

(C) TRAINING ADDITIONAL TEACHERS. SYARIF SAID THERE IS A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN INDONESIA, AND THIS IS COMPOUNDED BY THE LACK OF ENOUGH PEOPLE TO "TEACH THE TEACHERS". HE OUTLINED HIS GOAL OF TRAINING 400 PH.DS BY 1981 AND EXPRESSED HIS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR OUR SUPPORT FOR THIS OBJECTIVE. HE NOTED THAT IN ADDITION TO TRAINING IN THE U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES, 69 INDONESIANS ARE NOW WORKING ON ADVANCED DEGREES IN AGRICULUTE AT LOS BANOS IN THE PHILIPPINES.

3. ASKED ABOUT OTHER AREAS OF U.S. SUPPORT, THE MINISTER SAID HE DEEPLY APPRECIATED THE ALERT SERVICE WHICH HAS BEEN INSTITUTED BY USIS. THIS ENABLES HIM TO RECEIVE ON A TIMELY BASIS BOOKS AND ARTICLES IN HIS FIELD OF SPECIALITY. HE FOUND THIS EXTREMELY HELPFUL. I SAID WE WOULD ALSO BE MOST HAPPLY TO MAKE VIDEO TAPES AVAILABLE TO HIM AND HIS SENIOR STAFF. HE HAD HEARD OF THIS CAPABILITY AND EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN SEEING PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES AND PRESS CONFERENCES AND ANY ITEMS PERTAINING TO EDUCATION. WE WILL FOLLOW THROUGH ON THIS WITH HIS STAFF..
MASTERS

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